2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

expedition, was to be had in abundance by ascending the river. At the present time the knowledge of the navigation of the Straits would make it much easier and cheaper to import timber from Punta Arena than to send lumberers into the Cordillera and raft the timber down to Santa Cruz.

Near the Potrero, on the southern shore, there is a natural salt lake or salina, which must have been overlooked by the Beagle expedition, as Mr. Darwin fixes the southern limits of salinas at Port St. Julian. In the summer, and until the winter rains and snow set in, an inexhaustible supply of excellent salt can be obtained. It is at present worked only to furnish, besides the salt for home use, what is required for the annual sealing fishery; but if labour were more abundant, the salt would be found to be a valuable article of export to the Falkland Islands; the salina being situated less than half a mile from the beach, where there is good anchorage.

The river[1] also yields abundant supplies of fish—a species of bass and others—which when cured keep well: some which had been cured over a year proved excellent. These might be profitably exported to Rio Janeiro, &c., where cured fish are always in demand.

Notwithstanding these natural advantages, Santa Cruz could hardly at this period be considered a settlement. Subsequently to my visit, two Frenchmen from Buenos Ayres proposed to try sheep farming in the valley, but with what result I have not heard. As already mentioned, the station existed as a depôt for sealing, and as a trading post, to which the Tehuelches resorted to exchange their ostrich feathers, and puma, guanaco, and ostrich skins, for tobacco, sugar, ammunition, and above all, rum. There was little or no trade going on during the absence of the schooner, as all the stores had been exhausted; but after the summer campaign some of the Tehuelches invariably resort thither, and the vicinity has always been a favourite winter quarters. The missionaries, Messrs. Schmid and Hart, endeavoured to avail themselves of this opportunity for essaying the conversion

[1] [i.e. Santa Cruz River--Andyst]

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

and civilisation of the Indians. They resided for some time in 1868 at a spot near Weddell Bluff, about ten miles from the mouth of the river. To quote Mr. Sterling's description, the station was at the mouth of the valley which 'retreats towards the south-west for a considerable distance inland; a stream of pure water flows perennially through it, and a broad belt of grass, offering fine pasture for cattle, gives a cheerful, fertile aspect to the low land; the hills on either side are intersected with ravines, or lift up their bronzed faces out of some intervening dale, and refresh the air with the aroma of shrubs and plants growing everywhere about them.'

This was written after a visit in the summer month of January, and the picture drawn presents the landscape in its fairest colours; very different from its bleak aspect as viewed by myself in the winter. This valley still bears the name of Las Misionarios, but this is the only existing trace of their settlement. Mr. Schmid, however, during his sojourn and journeys with a party of the Indians, compiled a vocabulary of the Tsoneca language, as spoken by the southern Tehuelches. Their plan for establishing trade at Santa Cruz, in order to secure the regular visits of the Indians, was not approved of by the managers of the mission, and they were obliged to abandon the scene of their praiseworthy but unsuccessful efforts—to instruct at least 'the little bright-faced Patagonian children,' of whom they speak in their journals with warm affection.

The counter attractions of rum supplied by a trader who visited the river were felt by Mr. Schmid to be very destructive of his influence, but it cannot be doubted that their store, if established, would have had no chance against any rival that supplied rum to his customers; for though there are many exceptions, the Indians too eagerly expend the spoils of their hunting and industry in liquor. Their wives, however, when they accompany them, take care to manage their business with discretion, and reserve sufficient stock

[i.e. Santa Cruz trading station—Analyst]

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

sheep-farm, where he learnt to speak Spanish fluently. When thirteen years old he ran away and rejoined the Tehuelches Indians, with whom he remained in obscurity for some years, until being in the Southern district, near the Chilian colony of Port Famine, he gained the friendship of [127] one Santorin, a native of Patagonia, who had been taken captive by the Indians, but having adopted their manners and customs, and marrying one of the tribe, had risen to the position of a chief. Together these two performed a voyage to Chili, to negotiate with the Government in some matters regarding the protection of Port Famine from Indian raids. Santorin died during the voyage, but Casimiro was well received at Santiago by the then President, Señor Bulnis,* loaded with honours, and given the rank, pay, and rations of a captain in the army. He then returned to Port Famine, where he resided, off and on, for some time. By his own account, he was absent on a hunting excursion when the *émeute* took place which resulted in the destruction of the colony. The old wandering habits appeared to have taken possession of him, for he subsequently returned to the Rio Negro, and having entered the service of the Buenos Ayrean Government, again proceeded to the South. During this [128] time he resided occasionally with the missionaries, during their journey to the South, and at their station at Santa Cruz, and entrusted to them his two sons for the purpose of education. The missionaries soon discovered that his objects were purely selfish, and that he had no idea of allowing others to participate in the advantages they could offer; and I am afraid that the labour and cost bestowed on the boys were thrown away, as neither of them appeared to have profited much by their chances. Sam, indeed, could still sing a hymn if there were grog to the fore, and had a lively recollection of material advantages, often saying, 'He was good man, give me gun,' &c. But the youngest 'Gravial,' who also understood a little English, was one of the laziest of the

* Casimiro gave the name as 'Bourne.'